



The Installation Meeting of Southern Cross Council

In September the Brethren of Southern Cross Council No XIII held their Installation meeting at the South West Surrey Masonic Centre, Guildford.

A Degree of St. Lawrence the Martyr was opened by the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Denis Leigh. After a very moving tribute by R.W.Bro. Ray Hussey, Past District Grand Prefect, the brethren observed a moments silence for the passing of W.Bro. Gerry Yockney. The Worshipful Master then welcomed everyone present wishing them an enjoyable morning and lunch afterwards.



After the accounts were presented and confirmed, the outgoing Master, W.Bro. Denis Leigh, expressed his pleasure at the honour of having served as Master during the past year.

The Master Elect, Bro. Colin M Beerling, was presented to the installing Master, W.Bro. Denis Leigh, and answered in the affirmative the questions put to him. Brethren below the rank of Installed Master in this degree retired and a Board of Installed Masters was opened. Bro. Colin was then duly obligated, invested, entrusted, installed, and saluted.

W.Bro. Colin expressed his appreciation at the excellent ceremony and looked forward to a happy and successful term of office. He said that he felt very honoured to be among so many “luminaries”. He then appointed and invested his Officers.

W.Bro. Denis then invested the Worshipful Master with a splendid Worshipful Master’s collarette that W.Bro. Richard Baker had acquired for the Council and had presented to W.Bro. Chris Eley two years previously.



After the regular business of the Council was concluded, and the customary photographs taken, the Brethren of Southern Cross Council and their guests went into the bar for refreshments before sitting down to a very convivial lunch at the Guildford Masonic Hall.

A Tribute to Gerry Yockney

We were saddened to learn of the passing of W.Bro. Gerry Yockney, P.G.I.G., on the 16th of August 2023. It was a tribute to the man to see how many attended his funeral service at Guildford Crematorium on Tuesday the 19th of September.

Gerry was a devoted father to his three children, a wonderful grandfather, a doting great grandfather, and a loving and caring husband. He touched the lives of many with his kindness and compassion. He was a cherished friend to many and a very well Freemason.

Gerald William Yockney (Gerry) was born in the City of London within the sound of the Bow Bells on 22nd February 1936, which made him a true 'Cockney Yockney', which we are sure would have been something he was always proud of.

Gerry's parents met during their time as Sunday School Teachers but sadly the year after Gerry was born, the marriage broke up and they went their separate ways. However, Gerry's Mother, Ethel, found love again after meeting Oscar Garwood. Not only did this give her respectability and a new surname when they married, but also for Gerry too, after he was legally adopted by his Stepfather, so became Gerry Garwood.

Gerry enjoyed his school days and after passing his 11 plus exam he received a scholarship to Kingston Grammar school which really boosted his confidence and opened up all sorts of activities he loved doing, in particular rowing. Gerry's other passion which was also nurtured during his early days at school, was music where he learned to play the piano, and at an incredibly young age went on to take his piano exams which he passed with flying colours. These achievements certainly helped Gerry reach so many wonderful goals and create the diverse and interesting career path that would eventually follow.

In 1953 Gerry joined the Westminster Bank and the following year he went into the RAF to do his National Service where he served some of his time in Jurby on the Isle of Man. Little did he know that his future 2nd wife was living on the Island then, and was only 3 years old at the time! Gerry then went on to serve in Upavon and Hendon and in 1955 was commissioned as Flight Lieutenant. Then later on in 1968 Gerry joined the Air Training Corps and took command of 1345 Squadron in New Maiden.

Although Gerry thoroughly enjoyed his time in these roles, as they were varied and gave him the challenges he thrived on, he eventually rejoined the Westminster Bank but this time to work within various Management roles and served at branches located in and around London, Croydon and the South East, before he embarked on his last position as Manager at Haslemere which took him into retirement in 1993.

Gerry had married his first wife, Marian Clarke in 1959, but they went their separate ways later on. They had 3 children, Susan, Christopher, and Judi. Gerry's daughter Judi recalls the fond memories she has of when they were growing up and would go to Wimbledon Common on a Saturday morning for a drink and a wagon wheel and this was something they thoroughly enjoyed. Between Gerry's children he was gifted with 7 grandchildren, then sometime later Gerry was over the moon when he became a great-grandfather to four, and was then fondly known as G G.

Gerry's grandchildren recall the many fun times they had with him, particularly his bird antics when he'd bring his hand to them, tickling them which would send them into a fit of giggles whilst trying to get away. He also caused hilarity when mimicking the 'Ceremony of the Keys' the Yeoman Guards perform every night at the Tower of London. But in true Gerry style, using salt and pepper pots and he'd think nothing of performing his version of the ritual even up until recently and especially when they were dining out! But they adored Gerry, and he was so special to them.

Gerry's life was enhanced again when in 1996, he married his 2nd wife Christine. He had always wanted to go back to his birth name and so took the opportunity of their wedding to do so. He was a loving husband and totally embraced being a stepfather to Richard and Emma and when they had families of their own, they added 6 step-grandchildren, and he always thought of them as a lovely extension to his family. He had a fantastic relationship with all the grandchildren, and they'd snuggle up to him while he would spend hours patiently reading to them or be down on the floor playing games with them, even though later on he could rarely get up again.

There was always such a kindness about Gerry so it's no wonder he took on roles that would be of immense benefit to people less fortunate, and this was something Gerry was always so passionate about. For 38 years he was an external auditor for the Coal Benevolent Association which later led him joining the Worshipful Company of Fuellers, which helped with charitable fund raising, then he became a Freeman of the City of London. He was also one of the founding members of the Friends of Shannon Court, a Masonic Nursing Home.



Then when Gerry moved to Guildford, he became a much-respected Founder President of the Rotary Club there. There really was no end to his talents and despite his success in everything he achieved, Gerry was always so grounded and level-headed, a wonderful trait of such a wonderful man.

But we think we can say with confidence, all these achievements were born from Gerry's great love for his association with Freemasonry. This had been of great importance to him since he was initiated in 1968 in the Venture Ad Astra Lodge, founded by officers from the RAF and ATC. And, just as he did in his career, he rose to higher ranks joining other lodges and orders in and around London. And when it became difficult for him to travel, he still remained an active member more locally in Pulborough as he was living in Billingshurst and was delighted to still be playing the organ for the meetings.

Gerry's involvement in Freemasonry not only brought him a sense of purpose, and the opportunity to be with like-minded people, but it opened up a whole new world of friendships for him and Christine.

They enjoyed their social life immensely and there was always much laughter wherever Gerry went. Gerry would somehow usually end up being the one who would organise a Masonic Christmas or Summer Quiz where affectionate groans of 'Not another Gerry Quiz!' would be heard. But Gerry was very knowledgeable, so much in fact, that he was the best man to have on your team. On the flip side he was renowned for cracking terrible jokes too, but Gerry's heart was always in the right place and, as just like his family, his friends were of the utmost importance to him.



Away from his work and Freemasonry, Gerry enjoyed his hobbies, particularly music and photography and would often catch his subjects unaware and everyone said he always created the best photos by doing so. He also loved television quizzes from University Challenge to Tipping Point, Gerry also loved to watch Formula One and cricket.

During their time together Gerry and Christine were fortunate to have been able to travel over the world and Christine has fond memories of their times in Australia and America, to name but a few. But Gerry's special place was South Africa as experiencing being near the animals in their natural habitat was something that would always stay with him.

Although Gerry survived Covid and had been diagnosed with Parkinson's, he had an exceptionally long and fulfilled life. As well as all his wonderful achievements and his unconditional love for all his family he will be remembered as being a very special and unique man whose heart of gold shone through for being a kind and loving gentleman whose dedication, hard work, humour, and respect for others will always be held close to our hearts and he will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Congratulations

Congratulations to those Brethren of the District who will be receiving first appointments or promotion in Grand Rank, by the Grand Master on the 24th of October at the Annual Meeting of Grand Council at Freemasons Hall. All members are welcome to attend.



Past Grand Standard Bearers:

W.Bros. Simon Polkinghorne and Mark Guzam.

Promotion to Past Grand Junior Deacon:

W.Bro. Alan Brockwell.

I am sure that you will all wish to congratulate them on their achievement.



Annual Meeting of the District of East Lancashire



On Saturday 9th September W.Bro. Louis Keats, P.G.J.D., P.Dist.G.S.W., attended the AMD Annual Meeting of East Lancashire in Rochdale. W Bro Louis travelled the 100 miles or so with his good friend V.W.Bro. Tony Davis, P.G.Reg., Deputy District Grand Prefect, Northumberland and Durham, of which District he is also a member.



The intrepid travellers are pictured here before the meeting, which was very well organised and ran smoothly, all credit to R.W.Bro. Mervyn Wilson. District Grand Prefect, the DistGSec and the DistGDC.

The meeting was followed by a very convivial Festive Board. Your Northern Correspondent does not now need to travel to Lancashire till Friday for the Installation of a new Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler.

Article by Louis Keats, our Northern Correspondent.



The 2023 Annual Meeting of District Grand Council

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of Surrey will be held on Saturday the 2nd of December 2023 at the Croydon Masonic Hall.



The meeting will commence at 11.00 a.m. and will be followed by lunch at 1.00 p.m.

Brethren should be seated by 10.45.